(b) if so, whether the North Eastern Council has received comments on its study report from all the North Eastern States: and

(c) if so.lhe details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) NEC has received comments from only two States,/.©. Nagaland and Mizoram.

(c) The two State Governments have stated that air connectivity particularly intra-region connectivity needs to be further improved and the air fares rationalized in North-East. They have also suggested review of present arrangements between NEC and Alliance Air and installation of ELS at all the airports in North East.

Passport offices in district

†2598, SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister Of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to open a passport office in every district in order to facilitate and simplify the procedure of obtaining a passport; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) No. There is no such proposal at this juncture. Currently, there are 464 District Passport Cells (DPCs) in India, which accept passport applications. The Government have been impressing upon the concerned State Government to open DPCs in the remaining districts of the country as early as possible.

Posting of Tamil knowing High Commissioners

2599. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.